

Crystal Cove Historic District

Newsletter #1 Preservation and Public Use Plan — Crystal Cove State Park April 2001



State Park Interpreter Winter Bonin leads a beach walk at Crystal Cove's Historic District

Planning process addresses new Historic District realities: The resort contract was terminated and the tenants have agreed to leave in July

The goal of the public planning process

The California Department of Parks and Recreation intends to fulfill its dual mission of protecting the cultural and natural values of Crystal Cove State Park's National Register Historic District and providing for full public access and enjoyment of these unique resources. Toward this end State Parks is initiating a public planning process for the

Planning Workshop

Please join us in planning the future public use of the Crystal Cove Historic District. Our first planning workshop for this effort is scheduled for:

April 26, 2001

7:00 p.m. in the Multi-purpose Room

Lincoln Elementary School

**3101 Pacific View Drive
Corona del Mar**

State Park planners will discuss the planning process and the important role of public involvement in completing the plan. We will explore existing resources and constraints, public values, and alternative uses for the cottages located in the Historic District.

Historic District that will recommend how we will restore, preserve, and enjoy the cultural and natural resources. The goal of this planning process is to complete the *Crystal Cove Historic District Preservation and Public Use Plan*.

Fortunately we're not starting from scratch. The *Crystal Cove General Plan* and the 1982 *Historic District Development and Public Use*

Plan define our overall planning objectives: “First, to preserve and protect the special quality of this unique example of a Southern California beach community; and second, to provide full public use and enjoyment in a manner consistent with the preservation purpose.”

The 1982 General Plan deferred specific preservation and adaptive use decisions for the Historic District’s structures until the interior condition of each building could be evaluated. This investigation will soon be completed and the tenants have signed an agreement to vacate the Historic District by July 8, 2001. State Parks has initiated efforts to address immediate environmental concerns and to protect the site’s resources. With the resort development plan off the table, we now have an opportunity to work with the public to complete a preservation and public use plan for the Crystal Cove Historic District.

The planning process will specify:

1. Adaptive uses for the buildings and site that help preserve and interpret the Historic District and represent the highest public good,
2. How these adaptive uses might support building rehabilitation and on-going preservation,
3. What visitor educational and recreational opportunities and support services are needed and appropriate,
4. How the protection of natural values, wildlife, and plant habitats can be coordinated with preserving cultural values and recreational opportunities.

The Public Input Process

- **Workshop #1: Orientation, survey public values and ideas, and clarify alternatives**
- ☐ Workshop #2: Present preferred alternative and receive comments
- ☐ Optional third workshop for further discussion and refinement of preferred alternative
- ☐ Public review and comment of preliminary planning document
- ☐ Park Commission considers plan as informational item or, if needed, as a General Plan Amendment

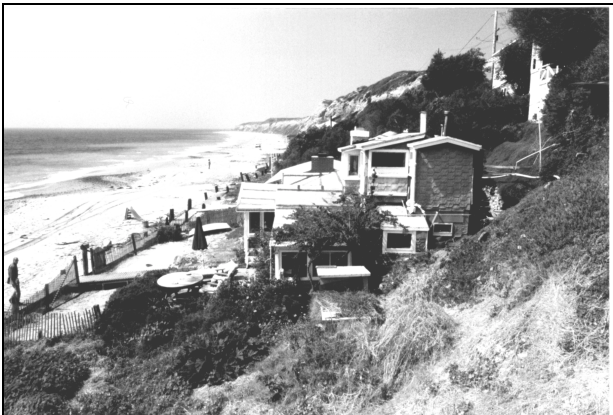
How the planning process works

The intent of the planning process is to provide opportunities for public input and to respond to expressed ideas and concerns. This planning process will consider the full range of ideas on how best to preserve and use the Historic District.

The planning staff has begun analyzing previous public comments in the light of existing constraints and the park’s mission and policies. Two or three public workshops will be held between April and September 2001.

Following the first workshop, planning staff will synthesize public ideas into a “preferred alternative” that seems to best integrate resource preservation and public use. This alternative will be presented for public comment at the second workshop. The public will subsequently have an opportunity to comment through the CEQA process.

We begin this planning process with a number of different visions of the best public use of the Historic District. But we share one thing in common — a deep interest in how the Historic District is best preserved and opened to public use. Through this nine-month process of working together you'll have the opportunity to express your vision for the Historic District and to hear other visions. By September, we'll have created a shared vision that represents the highest public values and uses for this unique place.



Looking north from the cottages

How we got here: Two decades of searching for how to preserve and use the Historic District

1979-1982

The Historic District is established, park land is acquired, the park is classified, and the General Plan is completed

1981-2001

Controversy blocks three plans for transitioning Crystal Cove from private tenancy to public use

State Parks has unsuccessfully tried to implement the general plan's vision for the Historic District through three different plans for preserving the district and opening it to public use.

The first public use plan (1981-1983)
Litigation and the resulting ten-year extension of tenant leases block implementation of the *Development and Public Use Plan*

The second public use plan (1991-1994)
Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Coastal Commission to adapt some of the cottages as a hostel is blocked by legislation that required State Parks to prepare a legislative report on alternative uses for the Historic District.

The third public use plan (1994-2001)
Implementation of Alternative 1 of the Legislative Report (the resort concession contract) is cancelled by State Parks after public concerns are expressed in the January 2001 meeting. State Parks has heard your concerns about this contract, namely that: 1) the proposed overnight rates for the cottages would place them beyond the reach of most visitors; 2) the proposed project seemed to threaten public beach access for non-resort guests; 3) the agreement seemed to disregard the 1982 general plan by proposing substantial new development; and 4) the agreement was signed before details were made public.

The state has consequently withdrawn this proposal to address public concerns that the Crystal Cove Historic District be improved to: 1) provide full public access; 2) provide affordable and appropriately-scaled public services; 3) preserve the cottages and the historic setting; and 4) preserve the scenic views and natural values of the site.

We are now beginning the fourth attempt to complete and implement a preservation and public use plan for the Historic District. This process has the best chance for success because the cottages will be vacant and this current public planning process will ensure public awareness and the greatest amount of support for any proposed use of the Historic District.



Where we are now

Status of infrastructure investigations and improvement

In response to the termination of the resort contract and the current Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board “cease and desist order” State Parks is preparing the *Crystal Cove Historic District Investigations and Interim Protection Plan*. This plan addresses environmental concerns at the Historic District, provides for interim protection of its structures, and directs investigations that will provide information needed for public use planning. Implementation of this plan does not limit our options in this planning process.

Tenant departure

The tenants’ association has signed an agreement with State Parks to vacate the Historic District by July 8, 2001. The departure of the tenants allows implementation of the *Investigations and Interim Protection Plan* and enables future implementation of the preservation and public use recommendations that result from the planning process you are involved with now.

Planning considerations

We begin this planning process with some “considerations” such as existing conditions, planning guidelines from the General Plan and

suggestions from park staff, and necessary facilities for public benefit and resource protection.

Some cottages have been modified over the years and many are in poor structural condition. Nevertheless, rehabilitation for public use is feasible, though expensive. The Historic District must be brought into conformance with Title 24 Building Codes, including the California Historic Building Codes, for construction standards, access, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and fire.

Planning guidelines

1. The department will provide as much safe access as possible for public enjoyment of the recreational, cultural, and natural values of the Historic District (*General Plan*, page 25).
2. The Historic District structures and site will be treated in accordance with the Secretary of Interior’s standards for the treatment of historic properties (*General Plan*, page 25). The scale and character of the cottages as a whole will be maintained.
3. Where possible, new visitor support requirements will be met by rehabilitating and adapting existing structures. If existing structures cannot meet such needs, new visitor support development shall be sensitive to and compatible with the historic integrity of the district (staff recommendation).
4. The northern bluff area and viewshed should be protected (staff recommendation).

Park support facilities

Certain park support facilities are required for public benefit and resource protection. Some of these exist and may or may not need improvement. Other uses and facilities need to be added, preferably by sensitively rehabilitating existing structures.

Necessary facilities and improvements may include:

1. Existing access roads, the bike trail, the pedestrian tunnel from Los Trancos parking lot, walkways, and stairways.
2. Addition of an entry area kiosk and night security gate, accessible parking, beach access and parking for disabled persons, and patrol vehicle access.
3. Rehabilitating selected existing structures and/or constructing new facilities for: lifeguard operations, a beach comfort station/outdoor showers/changing area, and possibly a dive equipment wash area.
4. Rehabilitating selected existing structures for necessary park interpretation and operations: interpretive programs and exhibits, security/staff housing, and maintenance/storage.

Adaptive use options for the Historic District

The following public use proposals for the Historic District structures have been gathered from State Parks planning documents, from the January 2001 public meeting, and from subsequent news articles.

Category 1. Park Visitor Support Uses (needed for public benefit and resource protection)

- ☐ Lifeguard/ranger office
- ☐ An interpretive/docent/visitor center
- ☐ Security/staff housing
- ☐ Maintenance/storage

Category 2. Educational and Arts Uses

- ☐ Classes in art, photography, environmental education, and marine studies
- ☐ House museums (historic interiors)
- ☐ An arts center
- ☐ Small concerts
- ☐ Small workshops/conferences
- ☐ Student intern programs

Category 3. Public Overnight Accommodations and Commercial Services

- ☐ Overnight rental units and associated administrative support facilities
- ☐ A hostel
- ☐ A restaurant and/or a snack bar
- ☐ Visitor services concessions

Presenting comments and use proposals at the workshop

The workshop will be dedicated to hearing and exploring your vision for preserving and using the cultural, natural, and recreational resources of the Historic District. Due to the large expected turnout, staff is proposing the following methods to efficiently hear and record your comments and proposals. Individuals will be encouraged to record their suggestions at comment stations around the room. Time will also be provided for group representatives to describe their proposal to workshop attendees.

You can help us understand your vision for the Historic District by addressing, where appropriate, ***how your proposal:***

1. Uses the buildings and site to help preserve and interpret the Historic District,
2. Could help meet the costs of building rehabilitation and on-going preservation,
3. Provides visitor educational and recreational opportunities to the general public, and
4. Helps protect natural values, wildlife, and plant habitats while preserving cultural values and recreational opportunities.

We want to hear from you!

Your participation is requested at the public workshops and meetings to be held over the next five months. Tell us how the Historic District can be restored and improved to meet your needs.

If you are not currently on our mailing list, and would like to receive the newsletter and notice about future workshops, or if you wish to send written comments, please contact us at this address:

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Alan Tang, Northern Service Center

P.O. Box 942896

Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Telephone: (916) 653-6466 or (916) 445-8906

For park information, please call (949) 494-3539.

For more information about Crystal Cove State Park and other State Park units visit:

www.parks.ca.gov

